

Sinclair Broadcasting's blatantly biased "news" strategy has been clearly in evidence in western Massachusetts. Our local station (Channel 40 in Springfield) was not allowed to broadcast the show in which Ted Koppel simply read the names of those killed in Iraq, citing the reason that it was political and provocative. But now we find that this same station is being forced to broadcast a blatantly political and provocative (and factually suspect) anti-Kerry "documentary". Sinclair must make a choice. If it wants to broadcast products from all sides of the political spectrum, without bias, that would be fine. But biased selection of political propaganda should not be countenanced. Totally outrageous.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.